لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE

REVIEW

OF RELIGIONS

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

SULH 1359—JANUARY 1980

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 in Qadian, a village in India.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences for their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brother-hood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

(For inland correspondents)
NAZIR ISLAH-O-IRSHAD
Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya,
Rabwah, Pakistan.

(For foreign correspondents)
SECRETARY
Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions,
Tahrik-i-Jadid, Rabwah, Pakistan.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

Annual subscription including packing and postage :

1.	Pakistan and Ceylon	... Rs. 15
2.	England aud other sterling areas	... £ 3.
3.	U.S.A. and other doller areas	... $ 3.00

Notes : Cheques and drafts should preferably be drawn on a Pakistani bank. In case a bill or cheque is drawn on a foreign bank, a collection charge of 50 cents for U. S. A. and 25 N.P. for U.K. should be added to the amount of subscription.

CONTENTS

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

1. The Three Basic Features of Prayer ... 1
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III

2. A Khutba on Eidul Fitr ... 22
Mr. Abdul Hamid, Ahmadiyya Muslim Missionary

3. Four Couplets *by The Promised Messiah* ... 28

نحمدہٗ ونصلی علیٰ رسولہ الکریم

The Review of Religions

RABWAH, PAKISTAN

Vol. LXXV January 1980—Sulh 1359 No. 1

THE THREE BASIC FEATURES OF PRAYER*

KHILAFAT LIBRARY KHILAFAT LIBRARY

وذکر فان الذکریٰ تنفع المؤمنین ۔ و ما خلقت الجن والانس الا لیعبدون ۔ و ما امروا الا لیعبدوا اللہ مخلصین لہ الدین ۔ حنفاء ویقیموا الصلوٰۃ ویو تو الزکوٰۃ و ذالک دین القیمۃ ۔

In the above quoted verses which I also recited in my last sermons God has drawn attention to the fact that the object of man's life on this planet is to recognise his absolute dependence on his Creator and Sustainer and to seek Divine help and guidance in his prayer. The concept of Islamic prayer is quite different from that of other devotional exercises, followed by votaries of various cults and religions, either through their own notions, or through the corrupt teachings of their leaders. Some of them pray only once a week at a given place and at appointed time and are led to believe that, by this weekly ritual, they

*A FRIDAY SERMON Delivered By Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III. on 9th of May 1969, at Aqsa Mosque, Rabwah. Eng. by Mr. Ehsanullah.

more than discharge the obligation to their Creator, Master, Sustainer and Benefactor. There are other religious groups who do not consider it necessary at all to undergo the routine of a periodical gathering for prayer at a particular place. Again there are some devotees who think that one can pray by the easy process of imaginary communion between God and man and thus fulfill the role of subservience.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

In the verses quoted above, Almighty God has further elucidated His injunction to mankind to pray to Him as fulfilling the basic purpose of man's life on earth. Mere formal prayer is, however, not enough unless it is accompanied by undiluted sincerity, flowing from a sense of love and gratitude for the Divine Being. This is the real significance of the expression مخلصين له الدين which refers to supplicants who adore their Creator not as a piece of ritual but out of sincere love and humility towards the Supreme Designer of the universe. I have already pointed out that this Quranic expression epitomizes the eleven obligations which God has laid on the shoulders of a true worshipper. I have also expressed my own views on each of these obligations. I will now proceed to deal with the subject systematically in the following synopsis :

(a) Prayer is the sole prerogative of God Who is unique in His power and glory and has no rival or partner in the entire cosmos. We should, therefore, approach Him as such, believing in His undisputed sovereignty over living and non-living organisms and ousting all other intermediaries, whether open or subtle, tangible or intangible, from the concept of our adoration.

(b) In praying to God, we should realise that He and He alone deserves our absolute submission and obedience. We should snapasunder the chains of slavery in every shape and form and approach Divine threshold as God's humble creatures, actuated by love and gratitude and free from all extraneous thoughts of aid and assistance. Even when we have to obey our earthly superiors in the course of our daily life, our obedience should be consistent with Divine

commandments and should have no tinge of outside pressure or emanate from materialistic tendencies.

(c) True prayer demands that we should imbue ourselves with Divine attributes. We should not mar the lustre of our character by doing anything contrary to Divine Attributes or anything below the prescribed standard. Our life should reflect, depending on the clarity and capacity of our mental set-up, the image of our Master, in all of our thoughts and deeds. In other words, we should conduct ourselves in our daily dealings and transactions, as if we were the instruments of Divine dispensation.

(d) According to the connotation of مخلصين له الدين which the word دين Din embraces, all our virtue, piety, and devotion, should be solely for God.

(e) In the true spirit of prayer, man should manifest in himself the attributes of God, no matter in what position of power and authority he is placed in the course of his public and private life. Incidentally, the connotation of power and authority is wide enough to include the role played by the head of a family whom the Holy Prophet has described as a shepherd or a herdsman in one of his traditions. Notwithstanding his position of influence and power, man should always act according to the Will of God, eschewing his own desires and inclinations and steering clear of the tendency to placate others by unwarranted deeds of omission and commission.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

(f) The sixth connotation of دين Din concerns the impact of habits on one's religious outlook. We should try to cultivate good habits to please God. Evil environment produces evil habits. We should, therefore, avoid it like plague if we wish to attain moral excellence and get nearer to our goal. Once we acquire good habits, we should never give them up through neglect or temptation. Each rising sun should witness not only greater stability in our moral framework but quite a few additions to our catalogue.

(g) The seventh connotation implies that when we gain victory or ascendency over our adversary, we should exercise our powers strictly in accordance with the Divine law and not in a spirit of braggadocio or self-glorification.

(h) The eighth connotation relates to human devices and arrangements. Some of them are resorted to by force of habits or in response to various stimuli. We do not consider them as the products of our efforts but as something atuomatic and spontaneous. In the hot weather, we generally keep the water receptacle outside at night so that we may get cold water in the morning. This results from our planning ability but, curiously enough, very few would call it as such because it has its roots in our subconscious reaction to environment. The fact is that whatever we do in the present throws its shadow on our future. In other words, it is in the nature of planning. The breakfast which A's wife prepares for the family is not a desultory action but a well thought-out attempt to provide food for the hungry members. Setting the table is another important routine which precedes every meal. The Holy Prophet used to take part in household chores to lighten the burden of the female members. Any act on the part of the husband like dish-washing or setting the table will be a part of the whole programme or an attempt to co-ordinate efforts to achieve the desired end. Similarly, any attempt to conserve food will have sound economic basis because a portion taken on our plate in excess of our need will go waste and cause loss to somebody. That is why the Holy Prophet has commanded that we should take only that much food on our plate as would satisfy our hunger and no more. In our society, people are, however, prone to fill the guest's plate according to their own estimate, thereby ignoring the injunction of the Holy Prophet.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

Two years ago I went to Rawalpindi. A friend sent us food for our dinner. I took food according to my need. The

hostess was carefully watching us. She apparently wanted to see whether we were doing full justice to the meal or were merely toying with the food. When she saw the moderate portion which I had taken, she could not restrain herself and came into the dining-room, and blurted out : 'I'm a rustic woman. I will serve you the portion which I think you need' ! I said : 'Please yourself, but I shall take only that portion which I actually need'. I suppose the excess portion might have been wasted or perhaps, in this particular case, eaten by the members of the family as a token of their love and regard for me. Anyway, the basic fact remains that unsound planning results in loss and wastage.

In short it is injunction of the Holy Prophet that all our plans and projects should be made to please God. To take only that much food which will satisfy one's hunger is to act in keeping with the Divine law, but to take greater or lesser quantity than one needs is either an act of imprudence which will result in unnecessary loss and wastage or a piece of downright camouflage to hoodwink people into believing that the so-called lean eater is a veritable saint whom earthly delicacies do not attract but who actually makes up the deficiency when left alone. Some people also show off their wealth by arranging extravagant dinner parties so that each guest gets a lot more than he needs. Instances are not wanting where a guest finds, to his great surprise, a whole roast chicken on his plate or a quantity of meat sufficient for a hundred guests is cooked for only one fourth of the number. Surely such behavior does not please God. Divine pleasure can be won if we formulate all our plans and projects, great or small, in accordance with the Will of God and not with an eye to our personal advantage or profit.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The ninth connotation of true prayer deals with correct appraisal of our thoughts and intentions and those of others who are placed under our care or guardianship. This appraisal should be made on the basis of the Divine law and be free

from anger, arrogance or contempt. Some people find fault with others without any justification. Such an opinion might well be called an emotional outburst and cannot be said to be a dispassionate estimate of the party condemned. Consequently, its unjust and irresponsible character will be in conflict with the concept of God-realization and will certainly invoke Divine displeasure. A just appraisal of our fellow beings should be aimed at bringing them nearer to God by removing the shortcomings which impede their march towards that goal.

It demands a charitable disposition, a broad vision, an unbiased approach and, above all sound judgement. Unless we keep before us this high ideal, our verdict of others will be unfair and distorted and will only serve to antagonize different sections of the population.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The tenth requirement of true prayer obligates us to keep in view the highest cannons of justice and equity while deciding cases between parties. Our decision should be based on the principles laid down by God in the Holy Quran and in the instructions of the Holy Prophet.

The eleventh condition governs the topic of return or compensation. In this matter, too, we should rise above mundane considerations and act according to the Divine law and the code of conduct prescribed by the Holy Prophet. Broadly speaking, when we do a good turn to somebody we should not expect any recompense or return from our beneficiary.

Anyway, I have described the obligations which devolve on us in the light of the Quranic instructions mentioned in the verse مخلصين لہ الدین . There are three more obligations which constitute the basis on which the eleven obligations are founded. In fact, the former are the source from which the latter take birth. The assemblage of these attributes will enable us to lay the foundations of a heavenly abode in this world on the bedrock of love for God and His creatures, fidelity to the mission entrusted to our care, stamina to offer

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

sacrifices for the attainment of our appointed goal, fortitude in the face of trials and dangers, magnanimity in the hour of distress and persecution and all those virtues which enrich our life and sanctify our soul. The heavenly edifice must begin here so that when we complete our earthly journey, we may find a fully constructed house for our habitation.

The foremost of the three fundamental requirements which form the basis of the eleven obligations mentioned above is steadfastness in faith. This will prepare us for the struggle of life, enabling us to meet every challenge, with courage and fortitude, and direct all our energies and resources to the service of God. Our prayer will then take on a new complexion. It will not be an intermittent exercise, suiting our convenience. In the spiritual world, there is continuity in every thought and deed. A task once begun goes on perenially with greater vigour and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, some people do not realize the importance and magnitude of this requirement. For instance, they call off prayer at certain intervals like schoolboys enjoying vacation after a session of six months or so. Others are not regular in saying their prayers five times a day, although all are enjoined to adhere to this time-table except when there is a valid excuse for its waiver. Again there are some who avoid coming to the mosque for the congregational prayers—a necessary routine according to the directive of the Holy Prophet. One might cite inumerable such Quranic commandments and traditions handed down to us by the companions of the Holy Prophet. Their observance demands regularity and consistency, steadfastness and perseverance. In the absence of these qualities, we shall be spending a portion of our life in the service of God and another in that of Satan. God will not accept such half-hearted attitude of worship for He expects us to lay down everything at His feet. Partial dedication to God and partial allegiance to Satan will not work. It will create a hell for us in this world during the course of our earthly sojourn and when we die we shall be thrown into another hell far more consuming and

frightening than the terrestrial one. Single-minded devotion to God and absolute merger in the ocean of His glory are essential for the attainment of true salvation ; otherwise our divided love and devotion will not carry us far in our march towards the Resplendent City. On the contrary, it will end up in God's displeasure and saturation of man's soul with devilish thoughts and propensities. Not only are we required to be steadfast and consistent in our devotion to God but, what is more, we have to develop an attitude of mind which regards prayer as a cheerful offering at the feet of our Master. Unless we pray in this manner, our prayer will be only routine a exercise with no enthusiasm or sincerity to elevate it to the status of genuine supplication.

Another fundamental underlying prayer is contained in the verse يقيموا الصلوة و يوتوا الزكوة which deals with the special aspects of Salat and Zakat. These two words have been used in the Quran with different connotations. In some places Salat is used to denote the prayer which we offer five times a day, consisting of both obligatory and optional parts ; while Zakat refers to a certain levy on the income of a Muslim under certain circumstances as explained and amplified in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. Apart from the technical connotation of these terms, there is also a fundamental meaning attached to them. This is brought out beautifully in the opening verses of Sura Baqara which deal with the emergence of three well-defined groups after the revelation of the Holy Quran :

(a) The Believers.
(b) The non-Believers.
(c) The Hypocrites.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The issues discussed in this verse are all basic and fundamental. In the verse quoted by me at the outset of my sermon, God has used the two phrases in the same sense as in the verse occurring in the second chapter of the Holy Quran. The two

phrases are used in both places in the basic connotation of prayer and pious deeds.

As already noted, Salat in its formal connotation stands for ceremonial prayer which is incumbent on every true believer. There is, however, another kind of prayer which we offer in time of need or emergency. Every individual has difierent needs on different occasions. He seeks their fulfilment from his Master and never fails to get them provided he adopts the right technique. The Holy Prophet has counselled us to approach God even when our shoelace is broken and to avoid the deceptive thought from our mind that we can get it through our efforts. Such prayer is individualistic in form and content and varies from circumstance to circumstance, occasion to occasion. But no prayer would be complete without observing the fundamental formula which consists in absolute prostration before our Creator in the true spirit of humilly and obedience stemming from our dependent position and His exalted status.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The Promised Messiah has pointed out that in ادعونی استجب لکم God has directed human beings to worship Him and that in return He will accept their supplication. The kind of prayer mentioned here relates to its fundamental structure and meaning. The moment we fulfil the requirements of prayer, God has assured us that He will grant our wishes. In this verse as well as in the verse at the commencement of Sura Baqara, the word Salat is used in the basic and not in the conventional sense. Unless we pray according to this fundamental sense consistent with our subservient position befitting the stupendous glory of our Master and Creator, our prayer will not reach its target: in fact it will be in the nature of an empty ceremony devoid of substance and purpose. Despite the fact that man by nature and temperament should satisfy the essential ingredients of fundamental prayer, he often does not, owing to various reasons.

To begin with, prayer in its fundamental sense excites

God's attribute of universal beneficence which draws the supplicant nearer to his Creator. This posture of comparative nearness to God or rather its partial realization by man serves to awaken his true nature which eventually creates an insatiable craving in his mind to win the pleasure of his Master. These two forces or impulsions—one having its source in the all-embracing attribute of God's beneficence and the other in the awakening of man's own sense of gratitude and love for his Creator or in the maturity of man's mental and spiritual evolution—combine to assign a new role of love and esteem to the supplicant vis-a-vis his Creator. This special status is granted to man alone and to no other object in the universe as I have already explained in one of my previous sermons. God's love extends to all objects. This is universal love. But over and above the display of universal love, God favours man with His special grace in return for the role which the supplicant plays in winning Divine pleasure. The Promised Messiah has expressed his views on the subject as under:

"The true supplicant approaches God with absolute faith, profound confidence, unbounded love, unflinching loyalty and indomitable courage. Awakening from the posture of supineness indifference, the wayfarer continues his journey in a state of self-abnegation until he reaches the Throne of Divinity and flings himself down at the feet of his Master with utmost love and reverence".

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The passage beautifully epitomises the real spirit of prayer. Until man develops this attitude of mind in the course of his prayer, his supplication will fall short of the basic objective. In fact, his mind will be dead to the philosophy of true prayer and therefore one cannot expect him to realize, much less fulfil, the obligations arising therefrom. True prayer demands firm resolve on our part to stick to the path of rectitude through thick and thin. With such determination we shall march forward to our appointed goal, overcoming all obstacles, dangers and temptations and, if necessary, embracing death in its most

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

horrible form with a smiling face and a cheerful heart. A true believer when called upon to choose between death and recantation unhesitatingly opts for death. The thought of saving his body at the cost of his faith never occurs to him. For him, death is really another name for union with God. Consequently, all threats by his enemies to annihilate his body leave him mighty cold because nothing affords him greater pleasure than to suffer for his faith particulary when he knows that it will open for him a passage leading to the presence of his Master. In short on reaching this stage of spiritual enthusiasm the aspirant, so to say, fulfils himself and gets nearer to God by dint of his supreme faith, love, fidelity and courage. Indeed, he loses his own volition and becomes virtually an instrument or mouthpiece of God. Then and then alone, in the words of the Promised Messiah, with the lifting of all barriers, he finds himself in the Divine Presence, unique and resplendent, All—Pervading and All—Powerful. He will have thus attained the basic objective of life through the right technique of prayer.

God has, therefore, directed true believers to turn to Him and be regular in their prayer because man has been created primarily for this purpose. This will equip man with necessary material to build his abode in Heaven. In the words of the Promised Messiah, prayer, in its fundamental form, melts the soul which then runs like fluid towards the Throne of the Almighty, stands there in reverence, bows before the Divine Presence and finally flings itself down in a gesture of utmost love and esteem, thereby reaching the peak of its devotional posture, known collectively by the name of Salat. The point to note here is that the ceremonial form of prayer known as Salat is, so to say, an outward pattern or reflection of what God has rendered fundamental to the performance of every bit of devotion in the form of sincere and spontaneous outpouring. The posture of the soul as it stands reverentially before its Creator symbolizes man's determination to face all difficulties and handicaps in the path of-God-realization

with courage and fortitude and also represents his general state of readiness to cary out all commands and directives, emanating from the Almighty. There is nothing surprising in this because, according to the inscrutable plan of creation, the soul, being immortal in contrast to the body, can get closer to the Almighty and win His untold favours and as a result, become an instrument of Divine will, carrying out the programme with thoroughness and fidelity.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

Another effect which fundamental prayer produces on the soul may be found in its complete allegiance to God exhibited in the form of Ruqu or obeisance. The Promised Messiah explains that the soul in the symbolic form of Ruqu expresses its absolute attachment to God in supersession of all other ties and connections. The fact is that when man reaches that stage of proximity to God he cuts his earthly moorings, so to say, and merges in God as a drop merges in the ocean. His connections and ties will be operative to the extent and up to the duration fixed by God to enable him to prform his social duties and functions. For instance, God has enjoined man to obey his parents, to respect them and to look after them. God has, however, fixed a limit to the performance of these duties. If the parents ask their children to practise idolatory or Polytheism or try to deviate them from the path of virtue and rectitude, the children have the right to take a different course from the one suggested but this does not absolve them from being respectful, polite, obedient and servicable in all other respects. A clear-cut line has been drawn which the children cannot cross in discharging their filial duties. In short, anything which may be in conflict with the fundamental concept of God-realization has to be abandoned as something foreign to the spirit of Divine worship, something devoid of all intrinsic value, something too insignificant to evoke or command sentiments of respect or reverence and too puerile and dwarfish to inspire feelings of fear or awe.

Having dealt with the second cardinal principle of fundamental prayer which establishes an indissoluble and lasting

connection between God and man, the Promised Messiah goes on to say that the supplicant prostrates himself in Sajda before his Creator in a state of self-abnegation and senses the a aura of His glory and power. Then and then alone the object of Salat is fulfilled for it brings man nearer to God. This completes the three essential requirements of fundamental prayer.

The Promised Messiah has thrown further light on this subject. According to him, there are actually two essential conditions which must be adhered to before any prayer can fulfil its basic purpose. The conditions are :

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

(a) That man should feel the glory and majesty of God, seek Divine guidance in the pursuit of his goal and comprehend the significance of Divine attributes and their actual working in the universe so that if, at any time, any extraneous agency tries to impede the execution of the Divine Plan, it is wiped out there and then.

(b) That the supplicant should not only feel that he is a non-entity by reason of his own weak and insignificant position in the cosmos, but should, despite his innate weakness and puerility, continue to discharge the duties assigned to him —duties which will be doubly blessed in a manner which will astound others who only depend upon their own efforts.

Thanks to these two conditions, man's prayer is endowed with the three qualities mentioned above as a result of which he builds an edifice which serves him as a heavenly abode not only in this world but also in the next.

In the Quranic verse يقيمون الصلوة God does not refer to Salat or prayer which, for instance, we shall say together after this sermon or which you say here five times a day, but rather to the prayer in its fundamental form, embracing man's obligations to his Creator. One cannot fulfil any of those obligations unless one prays in the right technique and in the proper attitude of a true supplicant. How can man claim to be subservient to God if, to begin with, he

is a slave to his Ego, or, for that matter, has many gods, tangible and intangible, in the sanctum of his mind? So the Quranic verse draws our attention to the prayer in its correct perspective which is incumbent on every Muslim. By developing an attitude conforming to the principles of fundamental prayer, an individual will begin to love God truly and unselfishly—an achievement for which he has been created—and will receive, in return, untold blessings and rewards from his Creator Whose vigilant eye watches everything including the unborn thoughts.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

At the outset of Sura Baqara, reference is also made to fundamental prayer which constitutes sine qua non for every bit of devotion offered to God. A prayer lacking in this essential condition will be simply a dull routine and no more. But if we introduce into it the ingredients of a true outpouring embodied in the three phases described by me earlier, the posture will be reactivated and bring about a permanent connection between God and the supplicant because God, being Life and Light, cannot accept the offering of a dead soul. This is, biologically, true because life goes with life and accept no intruder. As you cannot produce a living organism out of a dead organism, so you must not expect a dead prayer to reach the portals of the Almighty.

Prayer lays down some social obligations on man. Zakat or the offering of a fixed amount out of one's savings, is, in a way, bound up with man's obligations to God and with his duties and functions as a social animal. Directly, it is related to his role in society. I have come to this conclusion after much thought and deliberation. The kind of service which man offers to God is by nature different from what he renders as a social animal. His status in prayer is not that of a servant alone but something more, something proceeding from his sense of absolute dependence on and complete subordination to the Will of God. That is why in Zakat we do not find the same factor in visible operation which characterizes

the attitude of man in Salat or prayer.

Looked at from another angle, Zakat forms the second plank in the eleven pre-requisites mentioned in مخلصين لہ الدين. It is, of course, different from the formal rule which prescribes the giving of 1/40th of one's savings or the payment of a certain percentage of other obligatory levies. Zakat has, in its basic sense, different connotations which fit in with the dictionary meaning of most of the Quranic verses using the term. This gives rise to a subtle commentary on the subject of Zakat.

In the first place, the basic connotation of Zakat lies in the admission that God is the sole Master of everything in the universe. Keeping this in view, man is required to apportion his income according to the scheme propounded in the Holy Quran or elucidated by the Holy Prophet. God, being the real Master has the right to issue necessary instruction concerning the distribution of wealth. Nobody can question His wisdom in this respect. Indeed, God does not only ask man to be good to others at the cost of his own health, comfort and convenience but also enjoins him to look after his body. If there had been no such concessions, man would have been in a quandary. The Holy Prophet has, therefore, said :

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

"Your body too has a claim on you".

In simple language, it means that man is bound to fulfil the legitimate demands of the body and to keep it in a fit condition for the better performance of the mission entrusted to him. For instance, the body requires balanced diet to be healthy and strong and to be in a position to carry on its functions normally. In fact, man should consider life a sacred trust from God and should use it as a vehicle for the implementation of God's programme and not for the gratification of his desires. When the body feels sleepy and cries for rest, man starts thinking: 'Why should I sleep? Has God conceded this right to me? The answer comes: "You can meet these objections by fulfilling the conditions laid down by Islam for sleep. The right to sleep has

been granted to you by God for your benefit as a manifestation of His unbounded mercy". This aspect of the matter has been beautifully explained by God in the following verse:

"We have created sleep for your relaxation".

What does it actually mean? To begin with, the statement implies that if God had not conceded this right to man, the latter would not have been entitled to use it for rest and relaxation and for recoupment of his strength. Biologically, man gets tired and needs sleep to refresh himself. Consequently, God has permitted him to sleep: otherwise he would suffer and die. This cencession does not run counter to the fact that God has also directed man to imbue himself with Divine attributes. Now God does not sleep. Does it mean that man should follow Him in this respect? Certainly not. To do so would be wrong because the command is subject to certain conditions and modifications sanctioned by God Himself. It is evident that loss of sleep would impair man's faculties and render him incapable of fulfilling his obligations which grow with age and experience. Similarly, mention of Zakat in the verse مما رزقنهم ينفقون is made with the same object. Here God directs us to give something in charity or for public welfare out of the income which He has granted us. In other words, the final say in the utilization of our faculties and our resources comes from God and should be scruplously given effect to.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

It is related of a saint that some people objected to his wearing costly robes. He met their critism by explaining that he did nothing, not even the taking of a morsel of bread without the permission of God and that the wearing of apparel also came within the purview of this general technique. The fact is that God communicates His commands to man, directly or indirectly. Sometimes God speaks to man directly and repeats the injunctions contained in the Holy Quran or in the traditions of the Holy Prophet. In most cases, He does not adopt this procedure although the injunctions remain operative all the same. God has fixed rights far all—for our neighbours, for

our wives and children, for our kith and kin, and, in a general way, for entire humanity. Nobody has any competence to frame such rights for others in the way God does. Indeed, man cannot without God's aid and direction evolve any perfect code of rights governing his own mind and body. God alone, in His infinite wisdom and unbounded knowledge, can issue necessary instructions for man as an individual as well as a social animal. Underlying all these rights is the basic concept of Zakat which postulates the dominion and sovereignty of God over everything. As a corollary to this proposition, it follows that man must spend according to God's directive and concede rights to the extent God has permitted him. On this basis, Zakat is an institution which, by and large, takes care of public rights but in its essence it, too, is an offshoot of his prayer. To be more expressive, prayer is generic while Zakat is specific.

To sum up, God has created man for His worship and has directed him to fulfil the conditions attached to sincere prayer as laid down in مخلصين له الدين . What is more, prayer should be systematic and consistent and not desultory and spasmodic. The word Hunafa stands for regularity and steadfastness. A true supplicant must, therefore, bring pathos and regularity into his prayer if he desires that God may sanctify his endeavours and throw open the portals of paradise.

Secondly, the prayer should be a cry from the soul of the devotee, conveying his sense of helplessness and anguish and not just a dull routine to placate one's inferiority complex. If our prayer lacks this ingredient, we should beseech God to grant us the strength to render it a true vehicle of our ideas and feelings.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

You should have two aspects of prayer in view ; first, that the entire cosmos is under the undisputed control and direction of God Whose attributes are always at work and that any effort from any quarter to interfere with the Divine Plan shall be foiled ; secondly, that man, being weak and despicable by nature, cannot achieve anything with the aid and guidance

of his Creator. These two aspects keep the soul vibrant and docile. Once this happens the soul is invested with three characteristics which enable its bodily custodian to put up an edifice with the bricks of prayer and other material incidental thereto.

God has further directed that man should realize the fact that all his resources, his knowledge, his faculties, his influence and power, his friends and relatives, his wealth and possessions, whether in his own locale or otherwise, his sources of visible or invisible income ; in short, everything even the breath of his life belongs to Him. This holds good for an individual as well as for a nation. Since everything belongs to God, it is but logical that the distribution and use of all our properties and faculties should be in the light of the instructions issued by our Master formulating different rights for different persons or entities. The right to sleep has been granted to an individual to enable him to relax and recoup strength for the morrow. In my opinion, it is the duty of everybody to use the faculties and capacities which he receives from God in such a way that these may reach maturity and perfection in conjunction with other means and opportunities which God, in His infinite mercy, has placed at the disposal of humanity. In this way, the purpose of life will be fulfilled. Talking of the basic purpose of life, we must not forget the limitations of man as an individual. The fact is that every individual is born with different powers and capacities. For instance, one cannot aspire to attain the same peak of excellence which was reached by the Holy Prophet. Consequently, man should endeavour to negotiate his own summit of perfection physically, materially, morally and spiritually by developing his alloted powers and capacities in the best manner possible.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

It will thus be seen that God has granted rights to an individual for the good of his body, for the proper development of his ego, for the advancement of his worldly interests, for the orientation of his spiritual life, etc. etc. Man should there-

fore, be grateful to God for these manifold gifts. Incidentally, man has not been created exclusively for trials and sufferings. He has also been granted certain rights for his progress and evolution. These rights operate to his benefit in this life and will do so in the next. Their influence on his life after death will, however, be stupendous and permanent. Taking the picture as a whole, one might put down the rights in three categories:

(a) Man gets rid of the misconception that since everything belongs to God he should not appropriate it for his use and enjoyment. In other words man knows where he stands and cannot deny himself the bounties of the Almighty. His objections to taking food, wearing clothes and building a house as a means to protect himself from sun, wind, and rain will disappear because he comes to know that God has conceded these rights to him.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

(b) As a consequence of the position stated above, nobody has any locus standi to interfere with or object to the enjoyment of rights granted to man. The reply of the old man to his critics that he took food because God wanted him to, refers to the rights granted to man for the proper development of his powers and faculties.

(c) With the grant of rights to third parties, God has completed a code of conduct which is unique in every way. If this code were introduced to-day as it was in the days of the Holy Prophet, and remained in operation nearly three hundred years after his death, the world would witness a revolution of such magnitude that the BOLSHEVIK Revolution would seem insignificant.

Let me tell you here that God has promised that if people were to pray to Him in the right technique and redeem their obligations properly He would turn them into a dynamic nation which would be impervious to all decay and decline and would hold sway for ever and evermore. The recipe is contained in the two small Quranic verses quoted above.

So if you want to win imperishable glory in the world and a place in paradise, all you have to do is to carry out these instructions in letter and spirit.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

We know from the study of history that the companions of the Holy Prophet thanks to the direct influence of their Great Teacher, stood like a rock in the face of all difficulties and hardships and pursued their goal with supreme faith and unflinching courage. Those who followed them for a period extending to nearly two centuries displayed the same example of devotion, piety and sacrifice under the direction and guidance of the early torch-bearers of Islam. These men had learnt the true philosophy of Salat and Zakat and were therefore in a position to fulfil the obligations which God had laid on their shoulders and to enjoy the rights which the Divine Master had bestowed on them. As a result they became ideal neighbours, ideal parents, ideal partners in matrimony, ideal sons and daughters, ideal citizens and, finally, ideal internationalists. The combination of these qualities transformed them into veritable angels, working for the good of mankind, spreading the light of knowledge among the ignorant, carrying the message of God to the four corners of the World, guiding the lost sheep to their fold and distributing necessary equipment to the aspirants bound for the celestial journey. Such was their fame that even the bigoted critics from the opposite camp were compelled to pay tribute to these champions of Islam for their humanitarian mission and unselfish service.

The transformation which these brave sons of Islam underwent, was of course, due to the influence of the Quran and the instructions contained therein. They gave up pride vanity, arrogance, self-esteem and egoism. In return, God gave them a new life—a just reward for their supreme sacrifices. They knew that success in its proper connotation was impossible without God's love and guidance. They were also fully aware that anybody or, for that matter, any nation, violating the rights and obligations specified by God, or implementing them

half-heartedly, would certainly come to grief in the end. With this consciousness they became the chosen people of God and the recipients of His choicest gifts. They had the assurance that their sway and inflence would continue indefinitely and that no storm or misfortune could damage their fine structure.

The Quranic verse refers to their unflinching faith grounded in the cardinal principles of Salat and Zakat.

It is my prayer that God may enable us to grasp the significance and philosophy of His commands and grant us necessary strength and will to fulfil the purpose of prayer according to His specific instructions and to act as His true and staunch followers.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

May we turn out to be the instruments of His Will, having no volition of our own, no desire, no ambition. This kind of death will give us a new life, a life of love, charity and fellow-feeling. May we understand the true import of Zakat which postulates that since everything belongs to God, its distribution and use should also be determined by Him. May we have the consciousness to discharge our rights and obligations truly and adequately, giving each individual his due share and refraining from malice, jealously, hatred and arrogance so that the world may become an arena of peace and brotherhood and each one of us may approach God in humility and reverence. May this world be a paradise for us and a preparatory ground for our heavenly abode after death.

A *KHUTBA*— delivered on Eidul Fitr

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

وما خلقت الجن و الانس الا ليعبدون ۔

"And I have not created the Jinn and the Ins
but that they may worship me."

(Al-Quran 51 : 57)

JINN and INS are the two Arabic words which signify two classes of human beings and not two different species as some interpreters of the Holy Quran have previously expounded. JINN denotes the wealthy and influencial people who often remain aloof and do not mix with common people whereas the INS signifies the masses or the commonfolk. These classes of people remained as such ever since the creation of the world and will continue to remain so till the Day of Judgement. The Arabic word used for worship is *ibadah*. This word does not mean mere performance of certain known acts of worship such as Prayer, Fasting, performance of Pilgrimage etc., but has a much wider significance. The Holy Prophet says that any act performed in obedience to the commandments of Allah to please Him is *ibadah* or an act of worship. The word *ibadah* also implies belief in the Oneness of God and the declaration of it. Firm belief in God, is the fundamental requirement of man. Those who do not believe in God and His attributes and do not try to regulate their lives in accordance with the will of God as expressed in the form of the commandments in the Holy Quran are not fulfilling the object of their creation. They will not be successful in their worldly pursuits. Their accomplishments will be temporary and they will soon find themselves stuck in the laybrinth of their own doings and their end will

*The Khutba was delivered on the occasion of Eidul Fitr at the New York Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission by Mr. Abdul Hamid.

be miserable. The verse also means that both classes of men should try to have the true knowledge of God and worship Him. They should completely submit to the will of God so that whatever they say or do should be for the sake of God alone. This does not mean that the truthful are not allowed to use good or pure things or enjoy lawful comforts of life. We read in the Holy Quran :

قل من حرم زينة الله التى اخرج لعباده و الطيبت من الرزق

قل هى للذين امنوا فى الحيوة الدنيا ـ خالصة يوم القيمة ـ

"Say, Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good things of His providing ? Say, they are for believers in the present life and will be exclusively for them on the Day of Judgement." (Al-Quran 7 : 33)

Addressing all mankind, God says in the Holy Quran :

يا ايها الناس اعبدوا ربكم الذى خلقكم والذين من قبلكم

لعلكم تتقون ـ

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

"O, ye men worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may guard against evil." (Al-Quran 2 : 22)

The prayer is the essence of *ibadah* or worship, says the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of God be upon him). Whatever station in life we may have, we always need the help of the Supreme Being to Whom we should be able to address our grievances and supplications and receive consolation either by way of receiving answer to our prayers in words or by the removal or our distress or by the achievement of our objective. We also read in the Holy Quran :

و اذا سألك عبادى عنى فانى قريب ، اجيب دعوة الداع

اذا دعان فليستجيبوا لى و ليؤمنوا بى لعلهم يرشدون ـ

"And when My servants ask thee about Me, say

> I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way." (*Al-Quran* 2 : 187)

This wonderful verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) in relation to the month of fasting. The *Sahabah* or the companions of the Holy Prophet asked him questions regarding the blessings of fasting and prayers during this month. The words My *servants*, do not refer to all people but to only those who believe in God and obey Him. The clause, "I am near" does not mean physical nearness. In the verse preceding the above verse, we are told that the command to fast was given in order to purify us. Those who observe fasting become purified and thus they attain spiritual nearness to God, the nearer you are to God, the more clearly you can hear the voice of God. Today the month of Ramadan is over and we are observing Eid. Today is the day of great happiness to those who really and truly observed fasting for the sake of their beloved Creator, they worshipped Him more extensively during this month, they remembered Him day and night and they recited the Holy Quran. Surely they must have noticed a great change in their spiritual state. In one of the sayings of the Holy Prophet, he is reported to have said : "God says I am the reward of fasting". This saying is very encouraging because the wayfarrers are given a glad tiding that they can meet their beloved in this very world. Meeting Allah does not mean that one can see Him with physical eyes, or comprehend Him by reason. We read in the Holy Quran :

لا تدركه الابصار و هو يدرك الابصار و هو اللطيف الخبير .

> "Eyes cannot reach God, but He reaches the eyes. And He is Incomprehensible, the All-Aware." (*Al-Quran* 6 : 104)

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

To see God with physical eyes is out of question. To know God or reach Him by means of reason or understanding alone is also out of

question. It is because He is subtle and incomprehensible. He reaches the eyes, means that He reaveals Himself to the persons with purified soul. He speaks to them in clear words or He sends Angels who convey His words to such persons. Elsewhere we read in the Holy Quran :

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

ان الـذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل عليهم الملئكة الا تخافوا و لا تحزنوا و ابشروا بالجنة التى كنتم توعدون نحن اوليئكم فى الحيوة الدنيـا و فى الاخرة و لكم فيهـا ما تشتهى انفسكم و لكم فيها ما تدعون نزلا من غفور رحيم .

"As for those who say, "Our Lord is Allah, and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying : 'Fear ye not, nor grieve ; and receive glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter. Therein you will have all that your souls will desire, and therein you will have all that you will ask for. An entertainment from the Most Forgiving Merciful God!"

This promise is given in the religion Islam alone. Islam is like an evergreen Garden which knows no decay. Ever since the inception of Islam, the recepients of revelation from God have appeared in large number but they were all true Muslims. Christians say that God Who spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus does not speak now. Those who say that God does not speak now, are in a way right. They do not have such experience. Not long ago many highly placed Christian theologians declared that God is dead. A detailed essay on this subject was published in the Time Magazine of April 8, 1966. Let those who belong to the Death of God school of thought, come to us and we will show them that God is not only the Living God, but He still gives life to those who are

spiritually dead. I have attended many many Christian gatherings and talked to many theologians. They say, you just believe in the divinity of Christ and his vicarious suffering and you will get salvation. These are mere claims. They do not know what salvation means. The Holy Quran very clearly defines the course that one has to adopt to achieve this objective. How beautiful is the following verse :

بلی من اسلم وجهه لله و هو محسن فله اجره عند ربه و لا خوف علیهم و لا هم یحزنون .

It explains the fundamental truth. It says that the salvation lies in Islam which means complete surrender to the will of God and unqualified compliance with His word. Mere profession of faith is not enough. The word محسن means that one should worship God in a spirit of certitude, as if the worshiper is seeing God or AT LEAST HE FEELS THAT God is seeing him. The word محسن also means one who does good to God's creation.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam has explained this verse in the following beautiful words :

"... ... ... The verse alludes to the three important stages of perfect goodness i.e. (1) فناء (self annihilation) ; (2) بقا (regeneration) ; and (3) لقا (union with God). The words اسلم وجهه لله (submitting himself completely to Allah) teach that all our powers and organs and whatever belongs to us should be surrendered to God and devoted to His service. This state is known as فنا or death which a true Muslim must bring on himself.

The second clause و هو محسن (and he is the doer of good) alludes to the state of بقا or regeneration, for when a man is quickened by the love of God and all his movements become subservient to His will, his self dying entirely within him, he is, as it were, granted a new life which may be called بقا or regeneration. He lives for God and through Him he lives for his fellow beings.....The concluding words (*he*) *shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither*

shall they grieve, describe the third or the final stage—the stage of ﷺ or union with God. It is highest stage of knowledge, certainty, trust and love. The reward of one's sincerity and devotion is not obscure or doubtful. It is certain, visible and as it were tangible. In this stage man is so sure of the existence of God that he may be said to be actually seeing Him. No fear of the future darkens his faith. The dead past is buried and the living present has no sorrow for him. Every spiritual bliss is present. Such a state is termed ﷺ or union with God".

(Aena-e-Kamalat-e-Islam)

So we celebrate Eid today, because today is the day of our meeting with God or union with God. Let every one of you rejoice that as a reward for our fasting, our beloved God has drawn nearer to us. We are now in the lap of Allah. We are pleased with Him and He is pleased with us. Blessed are those who love God and, following in the footsteps of their Master, the Holy Prophet of Islam, Say :

قل ان صلاتی و نسکی و محیای و مماتی لله رب العلمین

"Say, 'My Prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds." (*Al-Quran* 6 : 163).

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

اے دوستو پیارو عقبیٰ کو مت بسارو

کچھ زاد راہ لے لو کچھ کام میں گزارو

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

دنیا ہے جائے فانی دل سے اسے اتارو

یہ روز کر مبارک سبحان من یرانی

FOUR COUPLETS

By The Promised Messiah

My dear friends,
Never forget the Day
Of Judgement : Pack some provisions
For the journey ; devote
Some time to good works !

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

This world is mortal :
Throw it out of your mind !
Grant us Thou, O Lord,
That this day, for us,
Be a day of blessings !
Holy art Thou, indeed ;
Thou seeth me always—
In Thy grace and compassion,
Thou watcheth over me,
Graciously mindful
Of all my needs !

جی مت لگاؤ اس سے دل کو چھڑاؤ اس سے
رغبت ہٹاؤ اس سے بس دور جاؤ اس سے
یارو یہ اژدھا ہے جاں کو بچاؤ اس سے
یہ روز کر مبارک سبحان من یرانی

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

Do not allow the love
Of this material world
To penerate to your heart ;
Liberate your mind
From its clutches ;
Upon it turn your back ;
Wean yourself away from it ;
Between it and yourself,
Put as much distance
As you can !

It is a dangerous dragon,
Friends ! Save yourself
From its horrible claws !
Grant us, O Lord,
That this day, for us,
Be a day of blessings !
Holy art Thou, indeed ;
Thou seeth me always—
In Thy grace and compassion,
Thou watcheth over me,
Graciously mindful
Of all my needs !

Eng. by A. Q. Niaz

BOOKS ON ISLAM

AND

CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS

1. Holy Quran with English Translation & Commentary.
2. Ahmadiyyat or the true Islam.
   by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad 245pp.
3. Invitation to Ahmadiyyat.
   by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad 345pp.
4. What is Ahmadiyyat ?
   by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad 88pp.
5. New World Order of Islam.
   by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad 117pp.
6. Where did Jesus Die ?
   by J. D. Shams
7. I s l a m.
   by J. D. Shams
8. Islam in Africa.
   by Mirza Mubarak Ahmad
9. Our Foreign Missions.
   by Mirza Mubarak Ahmad
10. Life of Ahmad.
    by A. R. Dard

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

Can be had from :

The Review of Religions, Rabwah, Pakistan.

PSALMS OF AHMAD

by SUFI A. Q. NIAZ

Price Rs. 15

Order your copy from :

The Review of Religions, Rabwah, Pakistan

REGD. No. L5746

In the Company of the Promised Messiah

By Ali Muhammad B.A.,B.T.

The long, and much awaited book, "In the Company of the Promised Messiah" by Ali Muhammad B.A.,B.T. Rabwah is available in the market. The book can be had of :

1. Oriental & Religious Publishing Corporation Limited Rabwah, Pakistan.

2. Messers Afzal Brothers Gole Bazar, Rabwah, Pakistan.

The book bears on the history of Ahmadiyyat .

The author himself, a companion of the Promised Messiah was an eye-witness of most of the events narrated in the book in a simple and lucid style. He enjoyed the company of notable companions of the Promised Messiah.

KHILAFAT LIBRARY

Pakistan Rs 10.00
England & other sterling areas £1.00
U.S.A. & other dollar areas $2.00

REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON

MICRO-FILM FROM UNIVERSITY MICRO-FILMS
A XEROX COMPANY, ANN ARBOR,
MICHIGAN, 48106 U.S.A.

Printed at the Nusrat Art Press, by Malik Basharat Ahmad and published by M. Masud Ahmad B. A. Rabwah, Pakistan, from the office of the Review of Religions, Darulsadar, Rabwah.